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ABSTRACT

The socioeconomic profile of clients who received the services of the Hispanic Liaison Program (HLP) from May 1991 to October 1992 is presented. The HLP's primary objective is to serve as a link between the existing services in Kalamazoo County, Michigan, and the Hispanic population, a group of people often underserved due to language, cultural, and economic barriers. Statistics were gathered from the main client database and organized according to their educational attainment level. Four categories were established: elementary, high school, vocational, and college. The data make it clear that education has a significant impact on the economic standing of the Hispanic population, with the more educated clients having a higher annual income, smaller family size, more normalized immigration status, and better employment opportunities. Mexican Americans were concentrated in the undereducated group and other Hispanic ethnic groups were highly represented in the college group. Additional findings are: (1) there is a large group of single, undereducated clients; (2) college-educated families tend to use Spanish more often at home than high school-educated families; (3) 100 percent of the elderly clients are concentrated in the undereducated groups; (4) 17 percent of the clients are non-documented, 35 percent are U.S. citizens, 33 percent are permanent residents, and the remaining 14 percent are unknown, visitors, or temporary workers; and (5) 66 percent of the clients are under 35 years old. Tables and graphs illustrate the findings. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education) (LB)

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SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE CLIENT POPULATION

The Effects of Poor Education

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November 1992

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Socioeconomic Profile of the Client Population

The Effects of Poor Education

By Jorge J. Ruano
Executive Director

SUMMARY

The following report presents the socioeconomic profile of the clients that received the services of the Hispanic Liaison Program from May 1991 to October 1992.

The Hispanic Liaison Program's primary objective is to serve as a link between the existing services in Kalamazoo County and the Hispanic population, a group of people often underserved due to language, cultural and economic barriers. By acting as a broker between the existing services and the Hispanic population, the Hispanic Liaison Program allows the Hispanic community to enjoy access to existing services.

The primary purpose of this report is to offer a descriptive analysis of the socioeconomic conditions of the clients served under the Hispanic Liaison Program according to their educational level. Statistics were gathered from the main client database, and organized according to the educational level that the clients had achieved. The country where this education was received was not taken into account. Four categories were established:

Elementary

This category includes clients that have not received basic elementary instruction in a class setting as well as those who have received instructional education up to the 12th grade, but with no high school diploma.

High School

Clients that received a high school diploma. , but have received no further education.

Vocational

Clients that have received some instruction in college, community college or vocational education.

College

Clients that have received one or more college diplomas. These subgroups were compared in six areas: Family Size, Ethnic Distribution, Language, Citizenship Status, Age and Income.

By comparing these four groups based on their educational level we can conclude that education has a significant impact in the economic standing of the Hispanic population. The more educated clients have a higher annual income, their families are smaller in size, and their immigration status tends to be normalized, allowing for better opportunities in employment.

The results also indicate that Mexican Americans are concentrated in the undereducated group, and that other Hispanic ethnic groups are highly represented in the college group. While 80% of the clients are of Mexican American descent, they constitute over 84%

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in the elementary group. While the other ethnic groups represent 20% of the client base, they constitute 78% of the college educated group.

Additional Findings:

- There is a large group of single, undereducated group of clients (24% of the total number of clients).

- College educated families tend to use Spanish more often at home than High school educated families.

- 100% of the elderly clients are concentrated in the undereducated group.

- 17% of the clients are non-documented, 35% are U.S. citizens, 33% are permanent residents, and the rest (14%) are unknown, visitors or temporary workers.

Although further analysis is required in order to determine if the results of these findings are representative of the Hispanic population in Kalamazoo County, there is some indication that our client population fairly represents the present condition of a significant segment of the Hispanic population: a target analysis of clients that received services from May 1991 to October 1992 indicated that almost 12% of the Hispanic population in Kalamazoo County had received some type of services of the Hispanic Liaison Program. The actual number of people affected may be much higher since this number only counts non-duplicated individuals without their family members. If family members are included, the number of people served may reach almost 30%. Given that the program strives to serve Very Low Income and Low Income families in the County, this report quite possibly describes the socioeconomic profile of the Hispanic Poor in Kalamazoo County, especially those in the undereducated group.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CLIENT POPULATION

Target Population

The target population is composed of 359 clients, or 70% of the total individuals registered in our files. The remainder 30% did not declare their educational achievement level and were not included in this report. Forty eight percent of the clients fit the category of Elementary (as it was described in the summary), thirty percent unknown, fifteen percent had completed high school, five per cent had some college or have participated in an apprenticeship program and two percent have completed college (see Graph 1).

Age Distribution

Eighty four percent of the target population is 45 years old or younger compared to 72% of the total population in Kalamazoo County (Source: County Data Profile 1991, The CEO Council Inc.,).

Over 62% of the target population is between eighteen and thirty five years old (see Graph 2).

Immigration Status

The immigration status of an individual is one of the most important factors affecting the socioeconomic condition of an individual. At least a quarter of the target population are known to be non-documented or their status is unknown; four percent are temporary workers, visitors or their status is pending a decision by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (see Graph 3). Only thirty five percent of the target population are citizens which suggests that the voting power of this group is very limited.

Language

The language classification used in this report refers to the language of preference that the clients use at home. Only eight percent of the target population use only English at home (see Graph 4).

(Note: These figures does not indicate the ability to speak either language, but merely reflects the language of preference at home.)

Ethnic Distribution

The Ethnic Distribution in this report departs from the traditional classification used by the U.S. Census Bureau where race and ethnicity of the individuals are separated. The report uses the ethnic background of the individual as a "race" category in the Hispanic subgroup. The inclusion of the Hispanic ethnicity as a race allows a better picture of the characteristics of the Hispanic subgroups in the target population. Ninety three percent of the target group are Hispanics; Mexican-Americans constitute the largest ethnic group followed by Cubans or Caribeans and Central or South Americans (see Graph 5).

Family Size

Forty eight percent of the target population are single, or married without children; eleven percent of the target group have three or more children. The large presence of single individuals in the target population group does not indicate that this group does not have children. There are a large number of cases where the individuals have family in other states or countries (it is a common practice in the migrant work force for the male to go to work in the fields or a factory, leave the family behind and send money regularly. The economic conditions in their home country are so poor that this practice is worthwhile for the non-documented group even though that their average annual income may be less than $8,000 a year). Clients with one to three children are 36% of the total target population (See Graph 6).

Income

The income distribution of these subgroups reflected more clearly the effects of lack of education in the Hispanic population. For the Elementary group, the average annual income was $8,369. We can get a clear picture of the difficult economic situation of this population when we take into account their larger families and less normalized immigration status.

For the High School group, the average family income was $12,847, for the Vocational group $10,784 and for the College group $16,737. It could be expected that the Vocational Group would enjoy a higher income than the High School group. This difference might be explained by the nature of their occupation: the High School group might enjoy the benefit of a high paying blue collar job, and the clients in the Vocational group might be still in college or underemployed. There was not enough data to determine why this difference exists.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Age Distribution

Graph 7 presents a comparison of the Elementary, High School and Vocational groups by age distribution. The College group was not included since the number of individuals in this category was very low.

The Elementary Group makes up the majority of clients in all age groups, but especially in the forty five year old and older group, where there is no presence of the Vocational or High School group. This comparative analysis suggests that the mature - elderly client has a very low educational level.

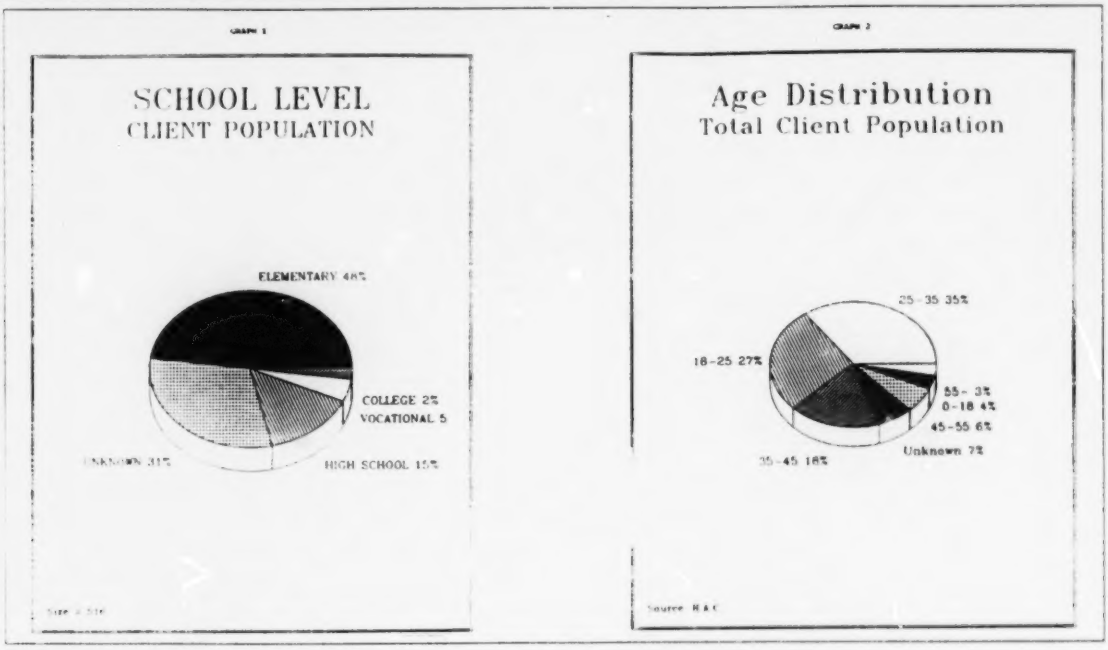
The largest group of High School graduates and Vocational Group is concentrated in the 25-35 year old bracket.

Immigration Status

Graph 8 compares the immigration status of the target population by each one of the subgroups. The most important finding is that as the educational achievement increases, the immigration status tends to be more normalized. The largest concentration of non documented is in the Elementary group while the largest concentration of citizens is in the Vocational group.

Language

The language preference at home seems to change substantially when the educational level of the individual is different in the target population. The Elementary group (see Graph 9) tends to be monolingual in Spanish (66% of the group) while the Vocational and the High school groups tend to use both languages indifferently. This difference might indicate a generational gap at home, where parents speak Spanish and children prefer to use English. The majority of clients in the elementary group are not U.S. citizens as



the Status comparison indicated and they might not consider English as their mother language. These two factors might be a good indication of the different type of socioeconomic profile between the Native mexican - american and the second/third generation Chicano. Of course, this explanation is subject to further study.

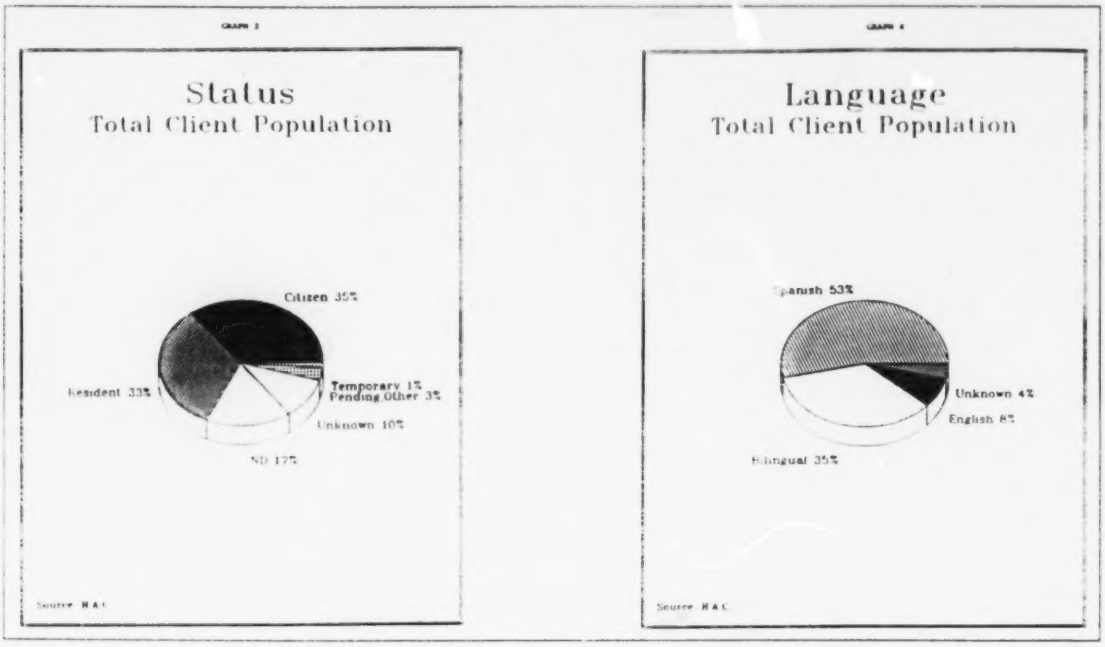
Another interesting finding is that no clients in the College group declared English as the language of preference. This may indicate a strong cultural preference of this group due to their ethnicity; it might indicate that Mexican-American families are more willing to accept the use of English at home than other Hispanic ethnic groups as Cubans or South Americans.

Ethnic Distribution

The ethnicity and the educational level of the target population exhibits the same characteristics as in national trend studies; that is, Mexican-Americans tend to be less educated than other ethnic groups. This is especially true in the College group (see graph 10), where only 22% of the clients are Mexican-Americans while in the Elementary group only 10% are Cuban or South Americans (this group makes over 60% in the College group).

Family Size

When we compare the family size of the target population the largest group is the single undereducated individual. The elementary group has the largest number of single individuals and the largest familes. The High School group tends to resemble more the general population trend of a married couple with one or two children. In the Vocational group (Graph 11) single individuals and the couples with one or two children tend to predominate. The average family size for the Elementary group it is 2.9; for the High School group it is 2.7 and for the Vocational group, 2.2. The College group was not included in the graph given the small size of this population. The average family size for this group is 2.1.



CONCLUSION

According to The National Council of La Raza's Hispanic Education: A Statistical Portrait, 1990, Hispanic Americans are the youngest, fastest-growing and least educated U.S. sub-population. The data presented in this report supports this finding:

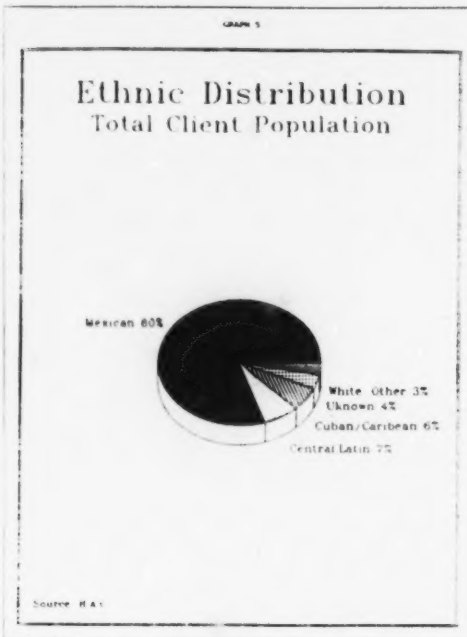
- Hispanics nationally are a young population: more than two thirds(67.5%) are under 35 years old. In our report 66% of the target population belongs to this category.

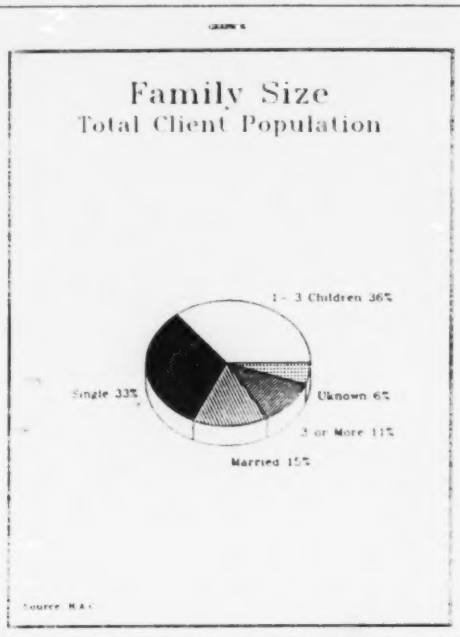
- About one in five Hispanic families has an annual income below $10,000. In our target population, only 17% of the target group declared to have an income higher than $10,000.

- Only 51.3% of Hispanics 25 years and over have completed four or more years of high school compared to 78.4% of non-Hispanics. In our target group, only 32% of the individuals have completed a high school education.

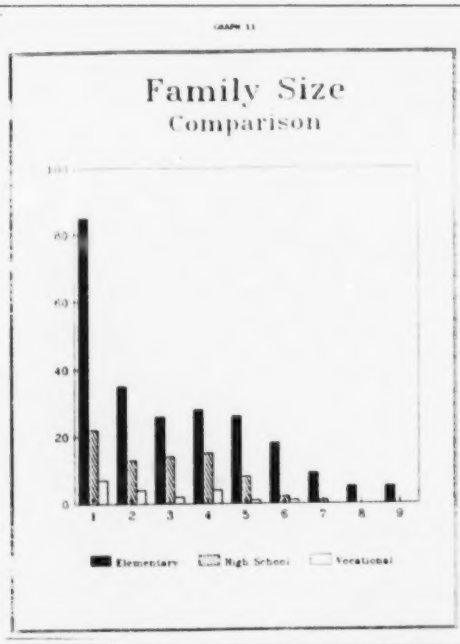
Although a complete Needs Assessment Survey is needed to determine if the target population's characteristics match those of the Hispanic population in Kalamazoo County, it is very clear that the findings of this report are in line with national trends in the Hispanic population.

The socioeconomic data presented in this report will help to explain the causes and the effects of one of the most pressing issues in our community: the low level of educational attainment of a segment of our population, locked in the circle of poverty and cultural isolation.

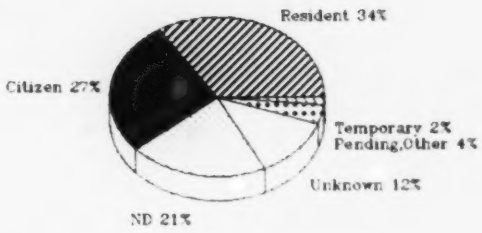

Ethnic Distribution
Total Client Population
Mexican 60%
White Other 3%
Uknown 4%
Cuban/Caribean 6%
Central Latin 7%
Source H.A.C.


Family Size
Total Client Population
1 - 3 Children 36%
Single 33%
Uknown 6%
3 or More 11%
Married 15%
Source H.A.C.

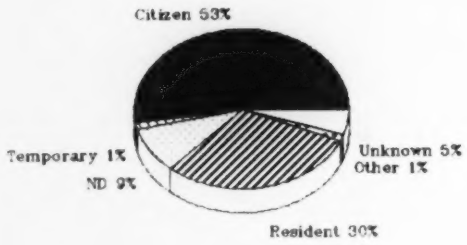
Age Distribution
0-10
16-25
25-35
35-45
45-55
55-65
65+
Unknown
Elementary
High School
Vocational


Family Size
Comparison
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
Elementary
High School
Vocational

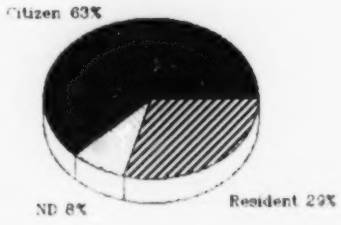
Status
Elementary



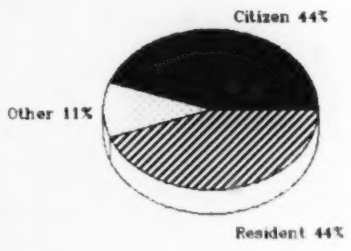
Status
High School



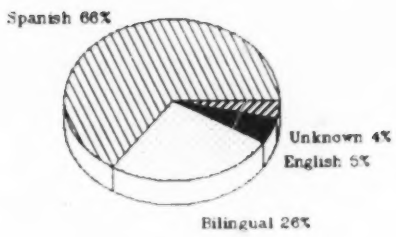
Status
Vocational



Status
College

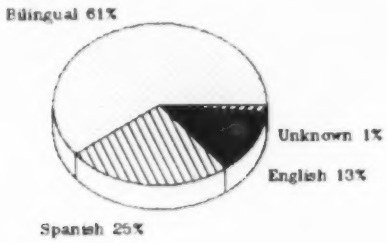


Language
Elementary



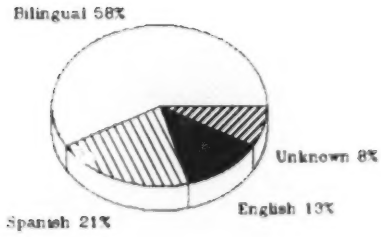
Preference

Language
High School



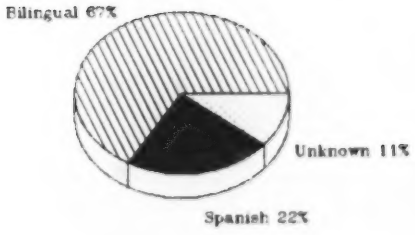
Preference

Language
Vocational



Preference

Language
College

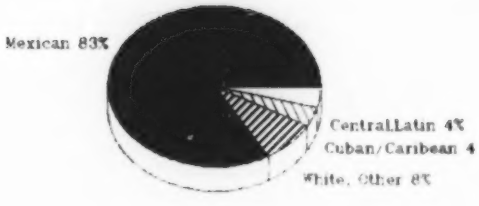


Preference

Ethnic Distribution
Elementary

Ethnic Distribution
High School

Ethnic Distribution
Vocational



Ethnic Distribution
College